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ABSTRACT

A survey of doctoral students who had completed a course in clinical supervision was conducted to assess students' perceptions of the effectiveness of supervision training tasks. Of the 45 surveys mailed, 27 were returned. Results indicated that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that all training tasks were effective in facilitating supervision skills. In particular, the respondents found that the most productive supervision tasks were the presentations of a developmental model of supervision and 1 hour per week of individual supervision of counselor trainees. Respondents reported that the least productive tasks were the viewing of videotapes of other supervisors in order to obtain personal growth readings and understand counselor trainees' developmental issues. It is suggested that further research be conducted comparing the perceptions of satisfaction reported by counselor trainees who were supervised by trained staff with the perceptions of satisfaction reported by trainees who were supervised by staff with no supervision training. The developmental process experienced by supervisor trainees during training warrants further investigation. Contains 12 references. (TS)

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AN EVALUATION OF A CLINICAL SUPERVISION COURSE FORMAT

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AN EVALUATION OF A CLINICAL SUPERVISION COURSE FORMAT

Training Tasks

- Presentation of a developmental model.
- Presentation of videotapes of actual supervision sessions used to illustrate the developmental model.
- Viewing and critiquing videotapes of other supervisors used to increase understanding of trainees' developmental issues.
- Videotaping and critiquing self in role of supervisor.
- Visiting trainees' sites.
- One hour per week of individual supervision of trainees used to develop practical supervision skills and evaluate trainee's competence.
- Developing a personal theoretical model.
- Reading personal and professional growth material.
- Writing a personal philosophy of supervision.

A Survey of Clinical Supervision Training: Students' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Training Tasks

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Running head: CLINICAL SUPERVISION TRAINING

Abstract

A survey of doctoral students who had complete a course in clinical supervision was conducted to assess students' perceptions of the effectiveness of supervision training tasks. Results indicated that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that all training tasks were effective in facilitating supervision skills. Issues that became apparent during evaluation of responses were addressed and suggestions for future action were provided.

A Survey of Clinical Supervision Training:

Students' Perceptions of Effectiveness of Training Tasks

All counselors in training need supervision. If the goal of supervision is to produce more competent counselors, then the competence of the supervisors is critical (Bernard, 1979). Hansen and Sevic (1967) emphasized the need to adequately prepare doctoral candidates to clinically supervise counselor trainees. Lumsden, Grosslight, Loveland and Williams (1988) stated that the growing body of literature addressing training and supervision of supervisors reflected the importance of supervision as a professional activity. Borders et al. (1991) further suggested that there is as yet, no comprehensive, standardized curriculum for supervision training.

Doctoral students in counselor education programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (1988) are required to receive instruction in supervision. Although there are no guidelines determining what types of experiences should be included in this instruction, the Standards for Counseling Supervisors (ACA, 1989) can be used to design training programs for supervisors (Dye & Borders, 1988). According to Dye and Borders, these standards outline areas of content and skills that should be integrated into academic courses for supervisors in training as well as workshops and inservice training programs for practicing supervisors.

Borders and Leddick (1988) conducted a national survey of supervision training and found that typical supervision courses were both didactic and experiential. Results of the survey suggested that supervision models were taught more frequently than specific supervision techniques. The authors revealed that common tasks in supervision classes were supervising master's level students, academic discussions of taped supervision sessions, and writing about a

student's personal theory of supervision.

Lumsden, et al. (1988) surveyed graduate psychology programs and found only 41% of the doctoral programs surveyed provided supervision training. They found that there were no formal or organized approaches to this training. Programs reported supervision approaches such as seminars, ad hoc arrangements by professors, assisting professors with practica, and observing one's own faculty supervisor. Although these surveys indicated that supervisor training programs share some common instructional methods, it is evident that there is a strong need for curriculum guidelines in this area (Borders, et al., 1991).

In 1991, Borders et al. presented a comprehensive curriculum for supervisor training. This curriculum was based on a framework of three curriculum threads and seven core areas. The curriculum was developed by specifying learning objectives in each of the three curriculum threads for each of seven core areas. One of the basic assumptions underlying this curriculum was that training involved didactic and experiential instruction. Based on research in counselor training, Borders et al. recommended that supervisor training programs include didactic course work, laboratory experiences, and supervised practica. No empirical research has been conducted to determine the effectiveness of these instructional tasks (Borders, et al.). In a discussion of training consultants, Brown (1985) also suggested that training models pair didactic and laboratory experiences in order to first develop knowledge bases and later develop practical competencies.

The purpose of this study was to investigate doctoral students' perceptions of the effectiveness of tasks assigned in a doctoral-level supervision training course in a counselor education program. The course was both didactic and action-oriented and consisted of three components: (a) the

doctoral students supervised master's level counselor trainees; (b) the doctoral students were supervised by a faculty supervisor; and (c) doctoral students participated in weekly classroom sessions where theoretical material was presented. The supervisor trainees were required to videotape at least two of the sessions in which they supervised a counselor trainee. These videotapes were then reviewed with the faculty supervisor. In class, videotapes of actual supervision sessions were used as illustrations during discussions of the developmental model of supervision. Other tasks included developing a personal theoretical model, reading personal and professional growth books, and writing a philosophy of supervision paper.

METHOD

A survey was mailed to all 45 doctoral and post-doctoral students in a counselor education program who had completed the program's course in supervision training over a period of three years. Each item in the survey represented a task from the course syllabus and was presented as a didactic question. The respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert scale the effectiveness of each task. The survey concluded with open ended questions that allowed respondents to share their opinions about certain aspects of the course and its requirements.

RESULTS

Of the 45 surveys mailed, 27 (60%) were returned. Results indicated that for the first eleven items the majority of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements (see Table 1). Responses to the open-ended questions varied. The majority of respondents (62%) felt that weekly individual feedback was an effective aide in their growth as a supervisor when continuously provided throughout the course. When questioned about the ideal size for a class in supervision, respondents recommended from 3 to 15 participants. Respondents also indicated

that a supervisor trainee should be responsible for one to five counselor trainees in order to maintain optimal effectiveness with two counselor trainees being the mean response. The majority of respondents (70%) stated that supervision training aided them in their work experience. Eighteen (66%) of the 27 respondents stated that they used administrative supervision skills, in addition to clinical supervision skills required in their current work setting. Participants were also asked when the clinical supervision class would have been most beneficial. The responses were almost evenly distributed with nine (33%) indicating the beginning of the program, 10 (36%) the middle of the program and 8 (29%) the end of the program.

CONCLUSIONS

The majority of respondents felt that tasks required in their supervision training were effective in facilitating their supervision skills and that supervision training was beneficial to them in their work settings. There were no respondents who strongly disagreed with any of the questions addressing the effectiveness of the supervision training tasks. According to the respondents, the most productive supervision tasks were presentation of a developmental model of supervision and one-hour per week of individual supervision of counselor trainees. The least productive tasks were personal growth readings and understanding counselor trainee's developmental issues through viewing videotapes of other supervisors. According to Hart and Falvey (1987), research has underscored the value of audiovisual supervision in advancing learning of counselor supervision. Perhaps the respondents found use of video-tapes in this manner to be relatively less productive because of the lack of specificity in the tapes. These tapes were of actual supervision sessions of supervisor trainees who had previously taken the class. Therefore, the supervisor trainee may not have clearly understood in which developmental state the counselor trainee was

functioning or whether or not the supervisor's performance was appropriate. One suggestion to address this issue is to develop scripted videotapes. Scripted tapes would illustrate specific developmental stages and/or issues of the counselor trainee, as well as how the supervisor could most effectively address the trainee's problems. The tapes could be individualized for the issues addressed in the supervisor's specific situation. This would provide a more structured approach by offering a clearer model for the supervisor trainee.

Freer (1987) considered one of the main strengths of his clinical supervision training model to be the quantity and quality of feedback provided to the supervisor trainees. Continuous and timely feedback was considered valuable by most of the respondents. Several respondents emphasized the importance of immediate feedback in the beginning of the semester to help them assess their skill levels and reduce their performance anxiety. This continuous feedback should be based on a review of videotapes made by the supervisor trainee with the assigned counselor trainee. Furthermore, feedback should not be limited to that given by the instructor or faculty supervisor. Peer feedback is also valuable. Borders (1988) assessed the value of feedback from peers in learning to supervise. The supervisor trainee may be less threatened and more receptive to feedback when it comes from peers.

Another issue that became apparent was the perception of some counselor supervisors that they need more training in administrative supervision. Since many respondents used administrative supervision skills in their jobs, training in techniques appropriate to administrative tasks should be added to the clinical skills training.

The participants different in their perceptions of the optimal time in the program for training in supervision. Students enter doctoral programs with different types of experiences, at different

levels of skills, and with different stages of readiness. Doctoral programs may wish to consider development of both introductory and advanced courses in clinical supervision. Borders and Leddick (1988) suggested introductory and advanced supervision courses.

An introductory course would focus on developmental models of supervision and give supervisor trainees responsibility for only one supervisee. The supervisor trainee would receive close supervision form the instructor, who would conduct weekly critiques and individual sessions with the supervisor trainee. The format might resemble a practicum with classroom instruction that introduced the literature in supervision and prescriptive techniques for the beginning supervisor. The advanced course would be an internship in supervision with the supervisor trainee responsible for five trainees and the group supervision experience. Classroom instruction would use a seminar format with peer supervision and critiques. Advanced supervisor trainees could be engaged in research activities that focused on the supervision process.

Although research on the supervision process has been conducted, little attention has been given to the dynamics of supervision training (Borders et al., 1991). The results of the survey were based on the respondents' perceptions of how effectively supervision training aided in the development of supervision skills for their work setting. Further research should compare the perceptions of satisfaction of counselor trainees who were supervised by trained supervisors and those supervised by persons with no supervision training. Another area that should be investigated is the developmental process through which supervisor trainees progress during training. Is the developmental model applicable to supervisors trainees? Finally, research that assesses the impact of supervision on the counselor trainees' clients is limited and should be considered.

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Table 1

Doctoral Students' Perception of Effectivenss of Supervision Course Requirements

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Undecided 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5
Presentation of a developmental model assisted me in understanding the problems encountered by my trainees.	0 0%	0 0%	1 3.7%	8 29.6%	18 66.6%
Presentation of videotapes of actual supervision sessions that were used to illustrate the developmental model helped me understand the problems encountered by my trainees.	0 0%	1 3.7%	3 11.1%	9 33.3%	14 51.8%
Viewing and critiquing the tapes of supervision sessions of other supervisors assisted me in understanding the developmental issues of my trainees.	0 0%	5 18.5%	4 14.8%	5 18.5%	13 48.1%
Videotaping sessions with my trainee provided feedback which assisted me in critiquing myself in the role of supervisor.	0 0%	3 12.5%	0 0%	9 37.5%	12 50%
Visits to my trainee's site assisted me in understanding my trainee's work experience.	0 0%	0 0%	6 25%	5 20.8%	13 54.2%
One hour per week of individual supervision of trainees enhanced my development of practical supervision skills.	0 0%	0 0%	2 8%	8 32%	15 60%

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Undecided 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5
One hour per week of individual supervision of trainees assisted in evaluating trainee's competency level.	0 0%	0 0%	2 8%	10 40%	13 52%
Developing a personal theoretical model assisted me in adequately supervising trainees.	0 0%	1 3.8%	4 15.3%	8 30.7%	13 50%
The readings facilitated personal growth.	0 0%	4 14.8%	3 11.1%	11 40.7%	9 33.3%
The readings facilitated professional growth.	0 0%	2 7.4%	1 3.7%	11 40	13 48.1%
The philosophy of supervision paper increased my knowledge of the supervision process.	0 0%	1 3.8%	7 25.9%	12 44.4%	6 22.2%